



City of New Bedford
Scott W. Lang, Mayor

City of New Bedford
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P R E S S R E L E A S E

City, NBEDC, & UMass Dartmouth Charlton College of Business

Team Up to Identify Local Business Needs

New Bedford, Massachusetts- Working closely with Mayor Scott Lang's office and the New Bedford Economic Development Council, 12 University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Charlton School of Business graduate students have begun a month-long project aimed at improving the business climate throughout the city as part of a "Business Innovation and Creativity" course taught by Dr. Gary Clayton.

In an effort to target three inner-city areas; the North End, South End, and Central business districts, the students will identify the business needs of each area and recommend strategic ways each area can flourish, in a manner that compliments the city's own Master Plan. The three-week program will run from January 1, 2007 to February 1, 2007. The students spent their first week becoming oriented with the city and its diverse businesses. In the second week, students will administer a survey of the targeted businesses areas and during the third week, they will collect and log the data compiled. The course will meet regularly in the fourth floor loft space of the Mayor's Office suite located in New Bedford City Hall.

The professor for the course, Dr. Gary Clayton of New Zealand has published on such topics as professional education, leadership, innovation and strategy, said the project is another piece of the puzzle that will provide the city with the information necessary to make decisions on how to improve its support of local businesses.

"We are looking for responses on how we can help New Bedford businesses and we expect diverse responses, from a need for more working capital to street cleaning programs," said NBEDC Executive Director Matthew Morrissey. "The student group will prioritize these requests and work with city departments to actualize these programs, whether it be by going to the Planning Department, the Department of Public Works, the Office of Tourism or other departments."

In the final week, the 12 students will present a 25-page report outlining their recommendations on ways to foster improvements in the target areas to the Mayor and other city officials. Mayor Lang, a strong proponent of this education partnership said, “This project will result in a mutually beneficial experience for everyone involved; the students, the city, and its business partners. I thank Chancellor McCormack for committing to this innovative program and look forward to the student’s final report.”

Charlton College of Business Dean Eileen Peacock said the focus of the program is to create an environment where students can generate innovative solutions to real-world business problems. “Instead of being constrained by normal thinking, we want them to devise strategies by using all aspects of business theory. We want them to think outside the box here,” said Peacock. “Although we don’t know exactly what will come of this, it may help to identify other projects we may do later on down the line with the city.”

Like Peacock, Mayor Lang said he also hopes that the month-long project is only the beginning of the partnerships between the city, area businesses and the university. “This project is a catalyst to meet the needs of area businesses and to create better business practices,” said Mayor Lang. “We hope this partnership will be the model for other professors and projects to follow for the university and the city.”

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